(c) whether the Government have evolved any policy for the people's participation in this programme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof including details of developmental activities undertaken under this programme and the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU) : (a) and (b) Western Ghats Forestry and Environmental project is under implementation in Karnataka to maintain the ecological balance in Western Ghats and to rehabilitate the Western Ghats Forests. This project is under implementation since 1992-1993 with the assistance of Overseas Development Agency.

ODA, United Kingdom. The details of funds utilised under the project for the last five years are as under :

Years	*Rs in lakhs*
1993-94	1027.645
1994-95	1300.507
1995-96	1492.378
1996-97	1590.216
1997-98	1856.995
Total	7267.741

(c) and (d) The major thrust area under the project is people's participation in the planning and management of forests. The State Government of Karnataka in 1993 has issued a Government order for involving local people in the management of forests through constitution of village forest committees. This was further revised in 1996 to facilitate involvement of villagers including women in the activities of village forest committees. The implementation of this project has resulted in afforestation of 40,312 ha and 424 Village Forest Committees have been constituted from the date of inception to end of March 1998.

Computer Education

*75. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce computer as a major educational tool;

(b) if so, whether the Government have made any prospective plan to integrate computer literacy with the present educational system; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) A programme of Computer Literacy has already been introduced on a wide scale in the States and Union Territories as well as autonomous bodies, like Kendriya Vidyalaya, etc. The Government recognises the need to develop computers as a major educational top in the wake of the remarkable developments in the fields of Information and Communication Technology.

(b) and (c) Several steps have already been initiated to popularise computer education at the secondary and senior school levels. Computer Science has been introduced as one of the electives in the academic stream at the senior school level. Another elective subject at this level is " Information practices". Similarly under the vocational stream a Vocational Information Technology Course has been introduced. In addition, provision has been made for computer literacy at class IX and X levels as on optional component of work experience.

[Translation]

Mid-Day Meal Scheme

*76. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the present status of the mid-day meal scheme for school children being run in the country;

(b) the names of the States which were provided food-grains under this scheme by the Union Government during 1994-95 to 1997-98 alongwith quantity thereof;

(c) the total amount spent by Centre on this scheme during 1997-98;

(d) whether the Government have made any assessment in regard to the implementation of this scheme;

(e) if so, the details thereof; State-wise and year-wise;

(f) whether the Government propose to give greater thrust to this scheme; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education popularly known as Mid-Day Meals scheme was launched on 15th August, 1995 and has been expanded to cover all States and Union Territories over a period of three years. 9.80 crore children in 6.86 lakh schools in 5,763 Blocks and urban areas are to be covered by the scheme during 1998-99.

The quantity of foodgrains allotted to all States and UTs under the scheme since its inception is as follows:

Year	Quantity (In MTs)
1995-96	7.13 lakh
1996-97	15.86 lakh
1997-98	25.68 lakh

(c) An amount of Rs. 1070.38 crore was spent by the Central Government on this scheme during 1997-98.

(d) and (e) As the programme has been extended to all blocks and urban areas in the country only in the year 1997-98, it has not been possible to conduct any formal review or evaluation of the scheme so far.

(f) and (g) According to present indications, the scheme is expected to continue during the Ninth Plan.

[English]

National Environment Fund

*77. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to set up a National Environmental Fund for developing forests with the help of global agencies like the UNDP;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have received financial assistance from International Institution Agencies/ Organisations during the last five years for setting up National Parks/sanctuaries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, including the position of utilisation of funds and the deficiencies observed in the implementation of the programme as per the guidelines by the State Governments and action taken/ proposed for mid course correction?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Do not arise.

(c) and (d) No financial assistance has been received from any international agency for setting up of National Parks/sanctuaries. However, a project titled "India Eco Development Project" funded by IDA/GEF is under implementation and it aims for bio-diversity conservation through eco development in Seven National Parks/Tiger Reserves. The project is in its initial stages of implementation with an outlay of Rs. 294.93 crores over a period of five years. The project has provisions for mid-term evaluation to rectify the deficiencies, if any, observed during the implementation of the programme.

Compensation to Students

*78. SHRI C.P.M. GIRIYAPPA :
SHRI RAMKRISHNA BABA PATIL :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Question Papers set up for the Class X and XII examinations conducted by C.B.S.E. in 1998 were out of syllabus and too lengthy;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to compensate the students on this count; and

(d) is so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) As per information received from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Question Papers set in Class X and Class XII examinations held in 1998 were within the scope of the syllabus and pattern prescribed by the Board.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

[Translation]

Conversion of State Highways into National Highways

*79. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN :
SHRI SITA RAM YADAV :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any requests from various States regarding the declaration of New National Highways and are considering to convert some State Highways into National Highways during the current year as well as Ninth Five Year Plan period;

(b) if so, the State-wise details thereof alongwith the names and stretches of each State Highway likely to be converted into National Highway during the said period; and

(c) the time by which these are likely to be declared as National Highways?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) Yes, Sir. Proposals for declaration of new National Highways from various State Governments have been received and during the year 1997-98, Government has already declared 18 new National Highways aggregating to a length of 4219 Kms in different States details of which have been given in the statement enclosed.